

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-05 IGA-02 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05

CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 IO-11 L-03

H-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06

XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

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P 131127Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4038

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: EAID, ECON, EFIN, CE

SUBJECT: PL 480 TITLE I

REF: COLOMBO 4007

1.DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL RESOURCES, WHILE MEETING
WITH FOOD COMMISSIONER, TELEPHONED AID REPRESENTATIVE
13 JANUARY URGENTLY ASKING ADVICE ON PL
480 TITLE I ALLOCATION FOR SRI LANKA. GSL
NEEDS WHEAT FLOUR SHIPMENTS STARTING IN APRIL.
TO MEET THIS REQUIREMENT, ORDERS SHOULD BE PLACED
NOW, WHETHER PL 480 OR COMMERCIAL. DELAY IN
ADVISING GSL OF PL 480 ALLOCATION WILL FORCE THEM
TO NEGOTIATE COMMERCIAL PURCHASES NOW WHICH,
WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF PL 480 AVAILABILITIES,
COULD BE EXCESSIVE. AS GSL PREDICTS 1976
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT OF RS 450 MILLION
(APPROXIMATELY US \$60 MILLION) AFTER ALL KNOWN
SOURCES OF FOREIGN AID,INCLUDING 100,000
METRIC TONS PL 480 WHEAT FLOUR (140,000 TONS
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WHEAT EQUIVALENT),SUCH EXCESSIVE PURCHASES WOULD GIVE

OCCASION FOR OPPOSITION PARTIES' ACCUSATIONS OF GROSS MISMANAGEMENT. FURTHERMORE, GIVEN PL 480 SHIPPING DEADLINES WITHIN US FISCAL YEAR, DELAY IN ADVISING GSL OF ALLOCATION WILL RESULT IN BUNCHING UP OF PL 480 SHIPMENTS TOWARDS END OF US FY 1976 ALONG WITH COMMERCIAL PURCHASES. THIS WILL DUPLICATE MID-1975 PROBLEM OF TOO MUCH AT ONE TIME, STRAINING PORT, TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE RESOURCES AND LAYING GSL AND USG OPEN TO LEFT-WING ATTACKS.

2. EXTERNAL RESOURCE DIRECTOR AND FOOD COMMISSIONER'S URGENT QUERY REINFORCES OUR CONVICTION THAT CONTINUED DELAY IN TITLE I NOTIFICATION TO GSL THREATENS TO NEGATE SIGNIFICANTLY ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE VALUE AND POLITICAL BENEFIT OF TITLE I PROGRAM, ESPECIALLY IF GSL FEELS OBLIGED TO MAKE LARGE COMMERCIAL PURCHASES NEXT FEW WEEKS. GSL BELIEVES IT MUST REPEAT MUST ASSURE FOUR AVAILABILITY THROUGH POLITICALLY SENSITIVE LATTER HALF 1976, PERIOD OF NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT CONFERENCE AND OF PREPARATION FOR 1977 NATIONAL ELECTIONS. GIVEN CONTINUED AVAILABILITY OF FRENCH FLOUR UNDER TWO YEAR CREDIT AND RECENT REPORTS OF BETTER AUSTRALIAN CROP, GSL CLEARLY IS CONSIDERING MAJOR COMMERCIAL PURCHASES SOON IF NO WORD COMES ON TITLE I NEXT SEVERAL DAYS. IT IS IN OUR INTEREST AS WELL AS GSL'S TO FEND OFF SUCH DECISION. THEREFORE, IF OFFICIAL AUTHORIZATION TO NOTIFY NOT POSSIBLE BY JANUARY 15 (REFTEL), CAN WE HAVE INSTRUCTION TO NOTIFY GSL INFORMALLY THAT 100,000 TONS TITLE I WHEAT FLOUR AUTHORIZATION WILL BE FORTHCOMING? IF WE CANNOT STATE AMOUNT, WE NEED TO KNOW EXTENT OF ASSURANCES WE CAN GIVE GSL. PLEASE ADVISE SOONEST.
PERKINS

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